



**HAPPY THANKSGIVING!** In the United States, Thanksgiving Day is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. But did you know that seven other nations also celebrate an official Thanksgiving Day? Those nations are Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Korea, Liberia and Switzerland.

# GAZEBOEXPRESS

YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS AND EVENT SOURCE FOR THE TOWN OF HIGHLAND • NOVEMBER 2011

## HHGREGG COMING TO HIGHLAND GROVE

Even before Borders closed its Highland location, electronics giant hhgregg was making plans to open a retail center there.

Building Commissioner Ken Mika said the town has received architectural drawings and an application for a building permit from hhgregg for the freestanding building located on the north end of Highland Grove Mall.

Mika said the company plans exterior renovations that mirror its other locations and minor interior work with an opening planned sometime after Jan. 1.

Redevelopment Director Cecile Petro said hhgregg was one of at least five national retailers who had been interested in acquiring the Borders location, which is more than 25,000 square feet and all-brick.

"We are thrilled to fill the space so quickly. I believe this speaks to the fact that Highland

### ABOUT THE RETAILER

- With its headquarters in Indiana, the store that would become hhgregg was founded in 1955 in Indianapolis as an appliance retailer and later incorporated televisions and electronics into its lineup.
- The company owns and operates 204 stores, all of which are located east of the Mississippi River.
- The retailer employs 5,600, nearly 90 percent of whom are full-time.
- Publicly traded since 2007 the company's NYSE symbol is HGG.

is a great place to do business," Councilman Dan Vassar said. "Hhgregg is a welcome addition to Highland's southern business corridor and we look forward to the grand opening." 🐦

## FITNESS CENTER TO OPEN IN 2012

Thirteen months into the Lincoln Community Center renovation, Parks Superintendent Alex Brown is eager to see the last phase completed.

At the end of October, crews were erecting brick walls in preparation for pouring concrete for the floor. Steel framing is due to be delivered in November.

"We are hoping to have the entire addition enclosed and under roof before the snow starts to fly," Brown said. "That way, they can continue finishing the interior no matter what the weather."

Phase II construction of the locker rooms

### JOIN THE FITNESS CENTER

The new fitness center features a variety of cardio equipment and rowing machines. Membership packages range from \$100 to \$450 a year, plus initiation fee.

**REGISTRATION:** The initiation fee will be waived if you register before Nov. 18. Call Parks and Recreation at (219) 838-0114 to get your name on the waiting list.

and banquet facility are complete but won't be in use until the building addition is finished. All interior work is expected to be complete by mid-January. 🐦



**IT'S A MUNICIPAL ELECTION YEAR. REMEMBER TO VOTE TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8!**

### HAMPTON IN HIGHLAND

The 25 apartments at Hampton in Highland that were seriously damaged in a fire one year ago are being rebuilt with upgrades that are firsts for the 455-unit complex.

Jen Chatel, assistant property manager, said the units are now equipped with cherry cabinets and quartz countertops, stainless steel appliances, porcelain tile, built-in microwaves and a building-wide sprinkler system.

The building will have a no pets/no smoking policy.

Applications are now being accepted for late December occupancy.

### 2012 TOWN BUDGET

Members of the Town Council trimmed more than 10 percent from next year's proposed budget before approving the 2012 spending plan. The town's general fund has been budgeted to be about \$6 million. The fund pays for expenses, such as salaries, utilities and health insurance. Total to be raised to support all funds is nearly \$13.5 million.

## CRIME WATCH MEETING

Every year, residents are robbed of thousands of dollars by gypsy scam artists. Minor construction projects, including siding, roofing and paving jobs are frequently the type of work gypsies perform. Learn how to protect yourself at this month's neighborhood Crime Watch meeting.

**WHEN:** 6:30 p.m. Wednesday, **NOV. 9**

**WHERE:** This month's meeting has moved to St. James Catholic Church, corner of 45th and Kennedy avenues.

**INFO:** Call Officer Shawn Anderson at the Highland Police Department, (219) 838-3184.

## YOUR COUNCILMEN



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## NEWS TIP? STORY IDEA?

Send your suggestions to:



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# POLICE DOG JOINS FORCE

## SPECIALLY TRAINED GERMAN SHEPHERD TO ASSIST HIGHLAND'S K-9 OFFICER

For the first time in five years, the Police Department has added a four-legged officer to its ranks.

At 14 months old, he is also the youngest.

Echo is a German Shepherd brought from Poland to serve with Det. John Swisher as a work dog for the Highland Police.

Council President Brian Novak said Echo was chosen because of his temperament and ability to discern between threatening and non-threatening situations.

"We stressed to the kennel before they selected Echo in Poland that we were looking for a sociable dog, one that would be able to interact within the schools and community, yet still do its job of drug identification, patrolling and tracking," Commander George Georgeff said. "We believe we have found that in Echo."

Swisher, a former police dog handler who was selected by the Police Commission to work as the town's K-9 officer, said he knew the moment he met the sleek shepherd that he had found the ideal dog for Highland.



"He stared into my eyes and I just knew this was the dog," he said. "Then, I watched him perform. He was the best of any of the dogs we saw."

Echo was purchased for \$10,500 with proceeds of the Public Safety Fund. That price includes six weeks of training for Swisher and Echo at Faus K-9 Specialties, a boutique kennel in Elkhart. Faus specializes in training police dogs and their handlers.

The two should finish their training and begin work in town by early December. 🐾

## THIRD-GRADE MERKLEY STUDENT WINS FIRE PREVENTION WEEK COLORING CONTEST

Julia Hart may have been surprised when she was called down to the principal's office at Merkley Elementary and told she won the Fire Department's Fire Prevention Week Coloring Contest.

Her mother, Jenny, said she was happy to learn Julia had won the contest, but not as surprised as her nine-year-old daughter.

"Julia tells me all the time she wants to be an illustrator and an author. Her favorite thing to do is to write and illustrate her own books. She even makes the covers out of cardboard and puts the books together," her mom said. "This prize was made even more special for her because coloring and drawing is what she loves to do." 🎨



Contest winner Julia Hart with Highland firefighters: (from left) Don Haynes, Tim Gurnsey, Dale Massey, Mike Pipta, Joe Rhodes and Ed Roy.

# Pumpkin Plod!!

When the race gun signals the start of the 2011 Pumpkin Plod on Thanksgiving Day, Jen Wolak plans to be there along with her husband, Ken. Jen walks. Ken runs.

It's a tradition the couple started more than 10 years ago as a way to exercise before the calorie-laden Thanksgiving meal. At various times through the years, one or more of their four children joined in.

It's a family outing they plan to continue.

"It's a great way to start the holiday, especially an eating holiday," says Jen, who is a local Weight Watchers leader. "I always feel like I have to earn some of that meal by working it off before I eat it."

She has a secret weapon to make sure she sticks to the plan.

"I invite everyone in my Weight Watchers group to come out and walk with me," she says.

"Because I told people I'll be there I know I'll go. I might dread putting on my shoes and going out if it's cold and rainy but I always feel good after I'm done."

## 36th annual race

This all-ages Thanksgiving Day race is a six-mile run or a three-mile walk through Highland. Join your friends and neighbors for this holiday tradition.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. **NOV. 24**

**WHERE:** Race begins at Lincoln Street and Kennedy Avenue and ends at Lincoln Center, 2450 Lincoln St.

**INFO:** Call (219) 838-0114 or [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org).

## Runner registration

**BY NOV. 21:** \$20 with shirt, \$15 without shirt

**RACE-DAY:** \$25 with shirt, \$20 without shirt

## Walker registration

**BY NOV. 21:** \$15 with shirt, \$5 without shirt

**RACE-DAY:** \$20 with shirt, \$10 without shirt



## YULE AID PROGRAM

The Salvation Army Hammond/Munster Corps is accepting applications for its Christmas assistance program.

Yule Aid is an effort by the Salvation Army to help families in need. It is the first step as the agency begins its annual season of giving.

Donations to the Salvation Army Christmas Kettles as well as individual donations of food and Christmas gifts will be distributed to families in need.

**WHEN:** 9 to 11:30 a.m. and 1 to 4 p.m. weekdays through **NOV. 11**

**WHERE:** Salvation Army office, 8225 Columbia Ave., Munster.

**NOTE:** Applicants must bring the following: current photo ID, proof of residence (lease, current utility bill or mortgage payment), proof of who lives in the house (Social Security cards, picture IDs) and proof of income.

**INFO:** Call (219) 838-0380.

## SUBSIDIZED TAXI PROGRAM

Highland sponsors a taxi program for seniors and those who are handicapped. Eligible riders can get a half price discount up to \$5. Applications are available at Town Hall, 3333 Ridge Road.

**INFO:** Call (219) 838-1080.

## HOT LUNCH FOR SENIORS

A nutrition site is offered for seniors aged 60 and older. Hot lunches are served at 11:30 a.m. for a \$2 donation.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m.-12:30 p.m. weekdays

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**RESERVATIONS:** Call Dorothy at (219) 838-0114 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

# OPERATION SOS KICKS OFF THANKSGIVING WEEKEND

Highland-based Operation SOS — Support Our Service members — is getting ready for its next holiday blitz and they need your help.

Donated items may be dropped off through Nov. 19 at Lincoln Center or at GameStop, 1519 U.S. 41 in Schererville. On Nov. 20, donations may be dropped off from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Wicker Park Social Center.

**INFO:** To have someone pick up your donation, please call Colleen Aguirre at (219) 923-5799 or (219) 682-6097.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP ...

### PACKING PARTY

The next packing party is from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday, Nov. 20 at Wicker Park Social Center, 2000 Ridge Road. Volunteers are needed to pack boxes.

### CASH DONATION

The group has spent more than \$11,000 to ship boxes of donated items. Operation SOS is a 501 c3 not-for-profit. Anyone wishing to contribute should make a check payable to: Operation SOS, P.O. Box 9308, Highland, IN 46322.

## PRODUCT DONATION

The list of donation items has changed this year. Most requested are cards and letters. Soldiers also would appreciate comforts from home, such as:

- Pop-Tarts
- tea, coffee, cocoa
- coffee
- lip balm
- ramen soups
- pastas
- canned meats
- nuts, candy
- dried fruit
- beef jerky
- gum
- microwave popcorn
- CDs, DVDs
- playing cards
- travel-size games
- plastic utensils



## VETERAN'S DAY CEREMONY

Join our veterans and the Daughters of the American Revolution as they salute those who have served our country.

**WHEN:** 11 a.m. Friday, **NOV. 11**

**WHERE:** Highway of Flags

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## COMMUNITY GARAGE SALE

Do you enjoy shopping for rare items, such as comic books, sports cards, Hot wheels, autographs and other memorabilia? Roger Parker from P & P Collectibles will promote the card show in conjunction with the Community Garage Sale. Register to sell your household items, toys, books, and more!

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **NOV. 19**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**VENDOR FEE:** \$26.75 per day for 10' X 10' space. Tables and chairs are not provided.

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## WINTER CRAFT SHOW

Get a start on your holiday shopping at the two-day winter craft show. Choose from soy candles, bath salts, jewelry, hand bags, home decor, gourmet dips, skin care, and more.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **NOV. 26** and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, **NOV. 27**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**VENDOR FEE:** Two-day show costs \$53.50 for 10' X 10' space or \$80.25 for wall space.

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## KIWANIS PANCAKE DAY

Join the Highland Kiwanians for a delicious flapjack breakfast. All proceeds benefit Highland K-Kids, Builders Club, Key Club and Dollars for Scholars.

**WHEN:** 8 a.m. to noon Saturday, **NOV. 12**

**WHERE:** Elk's Lodge, 3120 45th St.

**TICKETS:** \$6 for adults; \$4 for children under 12; free for kids under 2

**INFO:** Call Mike Pepelea at (219) 923-3343.

## PRESCHOOL GYMNASTICS

Enrolling your preschooler in the Tumblebear program allows your child to interact with other children, become more coordinated, increase strength and learn to follow directions in a structured yet fun setting.

**AGES:** 3- to 5-year-olds

**TIME:** Choose 10 a.m. or 6 p.m.

**DATE:** Tuesdays from **NOV. 22** through **JAN. 3**

**WHERE:** Lincoln Center

**FEES:** \$47/\$50 for the six-week course

**NOTE:** Wear comfortable clothing, gym shoes.

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.



# Tree-lighting Ceremony

Join us for the lighting of the park and businesses for the holiday season. Santa will have treat bags for good boys and girls. Food and beverage concessions will be available.

**WHEN:** 5 p.m. Saturday, **NOV. 26**

**WHERE:** Main Square

## SANTA'S MARCH

Parade with Santa through downtown Highland ending at the Main Square Park gazebo. Hot chocolate will be served.

**INFO:** For more information on these events, call (219) 838-0114 or [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org).

**WHEN:** 4:30 p.m. Saturday, **NOV. 26**

**NOTE:** Parade applications available at Town Hall and Lincoln Center.

## HOLIDAY HOME DECORATING CONTEST

Decorate your home for the holiday season and you could be eligible for cash prizes. Enter our contest and let our Park Board be the judge of the best decorated homes. This event is open to Highland residential homes only. Entry forms are available at Lincoln Center.

**ENTRY DEADLINE:** Friday, **DEC. 9**

**JUDGING OF HOMES:** Tuesday, **DEC. 13**

**NOTE:** A list of entries will be made public so that the community can enjoy the decorated homes.

**1st PLACE PRIZE:** \$50

**2nd PLACE PRIZE:** \$25

**3rd PLACE PRIZE:** \$25

**BEST NEW ENTRY:** \$25

**BEST USE OF THEME:** \$25

**BEST USE OF ONE COLOR:** \$25

**HONORABLE MENTION:** \$25

## PHONE CALLS FROM SANTA

Santa will call your child if you register at Lincoln Center by Dec. 7. Santa will talk to good little girls and boys about their Christmas wishes from 6 to 8 p.m. Dec. 8 and 9. Highland residents only.

## HIGHLAND BAND CRAFT FAIR

The best in arts and crafts will be showcased at this annual show. The two-day event features jewelry, ceramics, fiber arts and more.

**WHEN:** 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, **NOV. 12** and 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, **NOV. 13**

**WHERE:** Highland Middle School

**INFO:** Visit [www.highlandparks.org](http://www.highlandparks.org) or call (219) 838-0114.

## COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT

Celebrate the holiday season with joyful tunes at the Highland Community Band's winter performance. There is no cost to attend.

**WHEN:** 7 p.m. Thursday, **NOV. 17**

**WHERE:** Monbeck Auditorium at Highland High

**INTERESTED IN JOINING?** Please email Steve Strains at [sstrains@nirpc.org](mailto:sstrains@nirpc.org) or Greg Jasek at [maestroflute@att.net](mailto:maestroflute@att.net)